FAQ from 2014 Integrated Report Webinar
Hosted by John Kennedy
January 8, 2015

1. **Are the slides available on the DEQ website?**

   The webinar presentation can be found on our website: http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityAssessments/2014305(b)303(d)IntegratedReport.aspx.

2. **Are there any areas in Virginia with worsening water quality?**

   The biennial assessment process does not provide enough information to determine whether conditions are worsening. The data generated from the rotating ambient monitoring network may show elevated pollutant concentrations at a location over a two-year period, but a long, continuous time series is needed to establish whether these increases constitute an overall trend. A formal trend analysis, which DEQ performs every six years, was most recently presented in the 2012 Integrated Report. The majority of the state's fifth-order watersheds show either stable or improving trends in bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution. Watersheds with worsening trends may be prioritized for future TMDL development.

3. **Does the 46% SAV restoration goal reflect an increase from the last Integrated Report? Are we getting closer to meeting our SAV restoration goal when compared to the 2012 Assessment?**

   The last assessment determined that 47% of the SAV restoration goal was attained. Though there are indications that water clarity has been declining throughout the Bay since 1985, the overall SAV acreage has continued to move in a promising direction. More about Chesapeake Bay SAV status and trends can be found here: http://web.vims.edu/bio/sav/sav12/index.html.

4. **How is DEQ responding to the increasing concern over excess phosphorus levels and nitrogen levels?**

   Excess nutrients are a major cause of impairment, second only to bacteria. According to the freshwater probabilistic survey results, approximately 20% of the state's freshwater streams are negatively impacted by excessive nutrients. DEQ has developed 6 TMDLs to address excessive nitrate/nitrogen and 15 TMDLs to address excessive phosphorus, in addition to the Bay TMDL (which addresses both nutrients and sediments). Trend analysis (see link above) indicates nutrient pollution has improved or stayed constant in the majority of the state's fifth-order watersheds.

5. **What is the TMDL status of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River (HUC 02070006)?**

The bacteria TMDL for the North Fork Shenandoah River was developed in 2006 and approved by EPA on 9/26/2006. Within the HUC (02070006), there have been 3 TMDL Implementation Plans developed. These include, Holmans Creek, Smith Creek, and Linville Creek, which were approved by EPA in 2005, 2009, and 2014, respectively. Moving forward, there is currently a TMDL and a TMDL Implementation plan under development for Long Meadow Run and Turley Creek, and there are plans for the development of TMDL Implementation Plans for West, Crooked, and Stephens Runs in Frederick County later this year.

6. **Is any consideration being given to a phosphorus management tool similar to Maryland's proposal?**

DEQ staff is not aware of any proposals to alter Virginia's phosphorus management tool to be more similar to the tool utilized in Maryland. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees the management of land-applied fertilizer for agricultural production; DEQ regulates the land application of manure and biosolids from municipal wastewater plants and industrial sources. DCR uses the Virginia Phosphorus Index, a mass-based tool that estimates the annual risk of delivery of phosphorus from a given field to surface water, to determine a management strategy for phosphorus sources that are land applied. More about the Virginia Phosphorus Index can be found in DCR's Nutrient Management Standards and Criteria document.

DCR aids in the development of nutrient management plans to help farmers with manure testing for nutrient levels, calibrate nutrient application equipment, and coordinate soil nitrate testing in agricultural crop fields. Nutrient management specialists also teach farmers about nutrient management practices through demonstration field days, farmer meetings, and individual contacts. Additionally, DCR has a program to certify private and public sector nutrient management planners. DEQ manages the land application of manures and biosolids using regulatory criteria that include acceptable amounts of phosphorus to prevent contamination of surface or ground water.

7. **Does DEQ have plans to address atmospheric deposition of pollutants?**

DEQ's Air Division develops and implements programs designed to ensure that Virginia meets national air quality standards, and regulates the emission of air pollutants from industries and facilities by issuing permits that set limits that protect public health. DEQ conducts routine monitoring so that potential sources of airborne pollutants can be investigated and violators of state air quality laws can be prosecuted. More about DEQ's air quality programs can be found here: http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Air.aspx.

The 2006 General Assembly of Virginia enacted legislation (HB1055/SB651) that required DEQ to conduct a detailed assessment of mercury deposition in Virginia. The Virginia Mercury Study Report, finalized in 2008, contains the results of this assessment.

While the study found that sources outside of Virginia contribute substantially to the mercury deposition occurring within the state, it also predicted that continued implementation of statewide emission controls would reduce deposition significantly.

8. How do citizens nominate waters for monitoring?

Nominations can be submitted by mail, fax, email, or hand delivered to the receptionist's desk at our Central Office at 629 East Main Street, Richmond 23218, Virginia. See DEQ's Citizen Water Quality Monitoring website, http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityMonitoring/CitizenMonitoring.aspx for more information.

9. How can citizens get involved with water quality?

Citizens have a number of options available to them. They can nominate waters of monitoring by submitting requests directly to DEQ. They can partner with local water monitoring partners such as Virginia Save Our Streams and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay which submit data to DEQ for use in assessments. They can also do their part in pollution prevention by properly disposing animal wastes and applying fertilizers in a responsible manner.